THE

Work of MINISTERS, *rightly to Divide the Word of Truth.*

A Sermon

Preach'd at the

Ordination

of the REVEREND

Mr. William Gager,

At *Lebanon, May* 27th. 1725.

By *Eliphalet Adams*, M. A.

MAT. XXIV. 45, 46.

Who then is a Faithful & Wise Servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his Houshold, to give them Meat in due Season?

Blessed is that Servant whom his Lord when he Cometh, shall find so Doing.

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THE *Work of* MINISTERS, RIGHTLY TO DIVIDE the Word of Truth.

II. TIMOTHY II. 15.

Study to ſhew thy ſelf Approved unto GOD, a Workman that Needeth not to be Aſhamed, rightly Dividing the Word of Truth.

BEFORE I begin to Conſider the Words now read, I would firſt Apply my ſelf to this Numerous Aſſembly to beſpeak their grave and Reverent Attention; I have ſo often ſeen ſuch offenſive Diſorders upon ſuch Occaſions as theſe, People ſeeming to Imagine that it was a Time when they might allow themſelves more Liberty, And Forgetting, both that they were in the

Awful Preſence of GOD & alſo the Importance of this great Solemnity, that I cannot but think it Neceſſary to lay in a Caution now at the Beginning, that there may be no rude, Light or Unſeemly Behaviour in this Aſſembly this Day: The Solemn Separation of any Perſon to the Work of the Sacred Miniſtry (upon which the welfare of many Immortal Souls doth ſo much Depend) is a thing ſo weighty, that Every one who are preſent as witneſſes at ſuch a Solemnity, ſhould come Prepared with the ſpirit of Piety to aſſiſt as they are able with their Prayers and good wiſhes, that this may turn to the Glory of God, the Advancement of Chriſt's Kingdom and the Edification of his Church:

WHEREFORE Promiſing my ſelf that you will all take this ſhort Premonition in good part, I now proceed to Conſider the words of the Text which have been read.

THEY are Part of the Many Counſels, Charges & Directions which *Paul the Apoſtle, Paul the Aged,* gave to his *Son Timothy,* who had been accounted ſo faithful as to be put into the Goſpel Miniſtry.

IT would be too long to Inſiſt upon or even to Mention at this time, the many other Exhortations which he gave him, whither in the former

mer or this Second Epiſtle: Both of them ſhould be frequently read and Conſidered by the Miniſters of the Goſpel that they may know the better how to Carry themſelves in the Church of God.

IN this Chapter, beſides many other particular Charges, he gives him this in the Text, that he ſhould *Study to ſhew himſelf Approved unto God, a Workman, &c.* and that both in his publick Preaching of the Word, and more private Addreſſes to particular perſons.

HERE ſeems to be a manifeſt alluſion to Artificers, whither of this or that profeſſion, Some are Skilful & Acute and have no Need to be aſhamed of the work which they do, Others are Unskilful and Inexpert, They be not ſo well ſeen in the Myſteries which they profeſs, and their works or productions do by no means Commend their Skill, They may be aſhamed to Own that ever they were done by them;

THUS in handling the Myſteries of Faith, the Apoſtle would have Timothy (and conſequently all other Goſpel Miniſters) to be wiſe, accurate & Expert, that when he ſhould come to look back upon his performances, he might have no occaſion to bluſh at the Errors, the Blunders and miſtakes which he had committed;

IT is very True, there are many men that are but poor and Indifferent Judges of theſe matters, They may be apt to Complain, Cenſure & Condemn without a Cauſe, as if miniſters had fail'd in this point, Exceeded in that and miſtook them-

themſelves much in the other, when really they have acquitted themſelves Worthily and well; and it is owing to Peoples Ignorance or prejudice or fondneſs for this or that way of Sin, which they do not care to part with, that they thus Judge, Here I may borrow the Apoſtle's words which he uſeth in another Caſe, *Thou verily giveſt thanks well, but the other is not Edified.*

AND therefore the Apoſtle propoſeth, that he ſhould have God principally in his Eye, to whom he ſhould aim to Commend himſelf in every part of his Conduct, and whoſe Judgment is always according to Truth, *Study to ſhew thy ſelf approved unto GOD, a Workman that Needeth not to be aſhamed, &c.*

IF the Lord Approves and Accepts of us, we need not Value the blame and diſcommendation or Contempt that is poured upon us by man.

FARTHER, We may Obſerve that this Skill lies principally in *rightly Dividing the word of Truth*; Miniſters muſt take care to preach the Truth and that Truth which is revealed and Contained in the Scriptures, This is the *Rule*, the *Canon*, the *Book* to which we muſt ever Appeal, from whence all Doctrines muſt be Fetch'd and by it all Controverſies muſt be Decided; This word of Truth muſt be *rightly Divided* or *rightly handled*, as ſome think the word might be more properly rendered. Some have thought it to be a Metaphor, borrow'd from the Sacrifices of old which the Prieſts were to be very Exact and Nice in Cutting up, dividing into parts and diſtri-

diſtributing to every one their ſeveral Shares, whither to God, to be wholly Conſum'd by fire, Or to them that waited and ſerved at the Altar, or to the Offerers;

OTHERS have thought it to be rather Borrowed from the careful Diſtribution of food, whither at a Table or in a Family, that none might want their fitting ſhare, And ſo it may be well Explained by that paſſage of our bleſſed Saviour, in, Luk. 12. 42. *Who then is that faithful and wiſe Steward, whom his Lord ſhall make ruler over his houſhold, to give them their portion of meat in due ſeaſon.* But the meaning & Intent of the phraſe may be farther Conſidered afterwards.

IN the Laſt Place, that Timothy may be able to do this, He is Directed to *Study* or give Diligence and do his beſt Endeavour; This is the ſum of the Charge deliver'd in the Text.

WHEREFORE in the Farther ſpeaking to theſe words I ſhall Conſider

Firſt. THAT Miniſters of the Goſpel, ſhould look upon it as their work, rightly to Divide the word of Truth.

Secondly. THAT when they do ſo, they may paſs for Workmen that need not be aſham'd.

Thirdly. THAT their Principal Aim herein ſhould be to Approve themſelves to GOD.

Fourthly. THAT they ſhould Study, give Diligence and uſe their beſt Endeavour for this.

I. I ſhall Conſider, *THAT Miniſters of the Goſpel, ſhould look upon it as their Work, rightly to Divide the word of Truth.* Hence they are Termed *Miniſters of the Word* and their Work is deſcribed to be the *Miniſtry of the Word.* Act. 6. 4. *But we will give our ſelves continually to Prayer and to the Miniſtry of the Word.* And they are ſaid to be *Stewards of the Grace of God,* i. e. the Word of his Grace. 1. Pet. 4. 10, 11. *As every man hath received the gift, even ſo miniſter the ſame one to another, as good Stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man ſpeak, let him ſpeak as the Oracles of God.* And the Apoſtle ſpeaks of their being *made able miniſters of the New Teſtament.* 2 Cor. 3. 6 Their work and buſineſs is to Preach the Goſpel. Now this right Dividing or right Handling the word of Truth, here ſpoken of, may Comprehend diverſe particulars in its meaning.

AS

1. THAT *Miniſters do deliver the whole Counſel of God & keep back Nothing of the Truth, which hath been Committed to their Truſt, from the People to whom they are ſent.* They muſt acquaint their Hearers with the whole Scheme of the Chriſtian Doctrine and not ſuppreſs any Principles which it is proper and profitable for them to know, So the Apoſtle Paul declares that he did. Act. 20. 27. *For I have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the Counſel of God.* The Doing of this is a part of *Faithfulneſs* as well as of *Skill.* Miniſters are put in *Truſt with the Goſpel,* This is the *Treaſure* that

that is put in these *Earthen Vessels* and it is meant for the use of the Church, People must be taught all things which the Lord hath delivered for them to know; Not that we can suppose that this should be done by them in every Sermon they preach, but they must take their times for it in the Course of their Ministry, And this brings me to

2. THIS rightly Dividing or Handling the word of Truth, comprehends in it farther, that *Ministers do take the most suitable Times and Seasons to deliver the various Truths of Religion.* It was always look'd upon as a part of Wisdom to *discern Time & Judgment*, To know what and when and upon what occasion we should speak; These and those Truths are more seasonable & fit to be Insisted upon at some Times than they are at Others. There is what we may call the *Present Truth*, the *Truth of the Day.* When any part of Divine Truth is Labouring, called in Question and endeavoured to be Obscured and run down whither by weak or ill-minded men, Now it is proper for us, as we may, to stand up in its Defence, to open our Mouths and plead for it, that so Error and Mistake may not take place in its room. Again, There are some Truths which at some Times can't be born, they would quite Over-set people when their Judgments are weak, their Senses unexercis'd and their Improvements little, We must stay a while, till they are somewhat better grown in Grace

and Wiſdom, before we ſet this ſtronger Meat before them.

SOMETIMES the Delivering of certain Truths would only Irritate inſtead of Edifying, They would ſtun and Amaze people and lay occaſions of ſtumbling before them inſtead of profiting of them, We muſt ſtay till they are calm and Compoſed and in better temper and condition to receive them. Miniſters muſt Endeavour to hit the right Seaſons and Time things well, And probably this is part of the meaning when we'r directed rightly to Divide the Word of Truth, We may remember what is ſaid of our Saviour, Mark 4. 33. *And with many ſuch Parables ſpake he the word unto them as they were able to hear it*; And what the Apoſtle Paul ſaith of his own practiſe. 1 Cor. 3. 2. *I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for Hitherto ye were not able to bear it, Neither yet now are ye able.*

3. THIS rightly Dividing or Handling the Word of Truth, may comprehend in it farther, that *Miniſters ſhould Endeavour to make what they deliver plain, familiar and Eaſie to the Capacity of their Auditors.* It is one of the Qualifications of a Biſhop ſet down in this Epiſtle, that he muſt be *apt to Teach*, And indeed it is a particular Talent to be able happily to Convey the true & Juſt Notions of things into Peoples minds, which we are Deſirous to Inform them about,

ON the other hand, a cloudy and Myſterious way of Delivering things, Howſoever ſome Perſons

ſons may affect it & others can ſcarce tell how to help it; when they either Soar aloft & fly above the heads of the Auditory, Or elſe meanly Grovel below all rational meaning, this is like talking in an Unknown Tongue and it doth not ſeem to be rightly to Divide the Word of Truth.

4. THIS rightly Dividing the Word of Truth, may comprehend in it alſo, *that Miniſters do inſiſt more Frequently and Earneſtly upon the main and more Important Points of Chriſtianity, and more ſparingly upon the Leſſer and more Circumſtantial.*

INDEED every Truth of Religion is precious & the ſhreds & filings of Chriſtian Doctrine muſt not be Loſt, yet there ſhould be a meaſure obſerved in Inſiſting upon Doctrines in proportion to their weight, for there are ſome things in Chriſtianity that are of more Importance to be known, believed and done, than other things, Theſe we call *Fundamentals* as being more Eſſential points than others, ſuch as the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, his Undertaking, Accompliſhing & going thro' with the work of our Redemption when the *Word was made Fleſh and dwelt among us*, The way & method of our obtaining an Intereſt in his Merits, Mediation and Interceſſion at the Right Hand of GOD and the like, Theſe things ſhould be chiefly & mainly Inſiſted upon by the Miniſters of the Goſpel, Accordingly the Apoſtle *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*. 1 Cor. 2. 2. *For I Determined not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him Crucified.* Nothing in Compariſon

of

of this, nothing but what might ſome way or other be reduced to this, This was the beloved Topick which he meant to dwell upon, and he could ſcarce Think, or Talk, or Preach about any thing elſe; Now if Miniſters ſhould ſpeak more ſparingly upon theſe Heads and content themſelves only to give ſome hints at them ſometimes by the by, while their whole Time and Pains is Imployed in Deſcribing and Commending *Moral Virtues* or Expoſing their contraries (tho' theſe are things which may alſo well be done in their Place and Seaſon) Or (which is worſe) ſhould ſpend all their Heat and Zeal about leſſer and more Diſputable Points, altho' they ſhould happen to be on the right ſide of the Queſtion, this is not rightly to Divide the Word of Truth, but rather to fall into that fault which the Apoſtle cautions againſt in this chapter. 2 Tim. 2. 14. 23. ---- *Charging them before the Lord, that they ſtrive not about words to no profit, but to the ſubverting of the hearers; But fooliſh and unlearned Queſtions avoid, knowing that they do gender ſtrifes.*

5. THIS rightly Dividing or Handling the Word of Truth, may Comprehend in it, that *Miniſters do deliver theſe things, with all Gravity, Solemnity & Authority.* They muſt remember that they are not Engaged about any Trifling matter, but that they are as the mouth of the Lord to the People and are treating with them about things that concern their Everlaſting Salvation; The Life of Peoples Souls Depends upon

upon the good or bad ſucceſs of their Miniſtrations, therefore there ſhould be an air of Seriouſneſs, Zeal, Earneſtneſs, Gravity and Authority in their whole Deportment, as becomes thoſe who would fain ſucceed, gain People over to Jeſus Chriſt & bring them into a condition of Safety; whereas when Miniſters are Light and Trifling and mind more the Flouriſh & Sound of words, than the Weight and Importance of things; when all their aim is to Imbelliſh their Diſcourſes with the finery of Rhetorick, or to ſtrike the imaginations of the Auditory and raiſe their Admiration, rather than Inform their Judgment and Change their hearts; When they care not to tell People of their Sin, Danger and Miſery, till they have ſtudied a Quaint Speech to deliver the matter in, This is only to play and Trifle, This is to *handle the Word of God Deceitfully*, And it can never be thought, that this is rightly to Divide the word of Truth.

6 THIS rightly Dividing or Handling the Word of Truth may Comprehend in it, that *Miniſters deliver their Doctrines, with ſome Commendable Method, Connection and Exactneſs.*

AS it is very Agreeable and Entertaining to ſee Husbandmen Neat about their Buſineſs, and their Fields lying in an Exact and beautiful Order, And on the other hand, it offends the Eye to paſs by the *Sluggards field and behold it overrun with Bryars and Thorns and the ſtone wall thereof broken Down*;

AND

AND as it almoſt puts us out of conce with an Artificer when he is Coarſe and Slight and Slovenly about his work and doth by n means come up to the Elegancy and Exactneſ of his Brethren; So it is Expected from Mi niſters, that in this reſpect they ſhew themſelve Workmen that need not to be aſhamed, Tha they do not entertain their Auditoryes with In cohærent and Empty Diſcourſes, without Senſ or Meaning, Method or Order, Filled up with Rambling Excurſions, Unneceſſary Expletive and vehement Accents, that no rational Perſo can tell what they Mean or Drive at, nor they themſelves give any Tolerable account of it Like them in 1 Tim. 1. 6,7. *From which ſome having ſwerved, have turned aſide to vain Jangling, Deſiring to be teachers of the Law, underſtanding neither what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm.* Noiſe & Loud neſs and a great deal of Buſtle and Adoe in th delivering of things, tho' it may take ſtrangel with ſome Injudicious People, yet it will be o little real ſervice, if care be not taken at th ſame time to Digeſt and Diſpoſe what is Deli vered into a proper method; We read in 1 Co 14. 7, 8. *And even things without Life giving ſound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a diſtinction in the ſounds, how ſhall it be known what is piped o harped? For if the Trumpet give an uncertain ſound who ſhall prepare himſelf to the Battle?* So that it i not the *Loudneſs of the Noiſe* which is made, bu the *Diſtinction of the Sounds* that is to be *Minded* When we hear ſome great noiſe made with

theſe

hese Inſtruments, we may indeed tell that ſome-hing is the matter; but without the Diſtinction f Sounds, no man can tell what. Now this may ot only have reference to *ſpeaking in a known or nknown Tongue*, (which is the caſe that the A-oſtle inſtanceth in) but alſo to the Plainneſs, he Method & Inſtructiveneſs of the Diſcourſe.

7. THIS rightly Dividing or Handling the Word of Truth, Comprehends in it that *Miniſters e careful to give to every one their proper Portion.* ven in thoſe Early Times, they preach'd to ixed Aſſemblies and Poſſibly it is much more Now; Every one ſhould have their portion ſſigned them with much Care and Judgment. he *Lambs* muſt be *fed* as well as the *Sheep*, They hat require *ſtronger Meat*, muſt have it Diligent-ſet before them, and they that *uſe* or can *bear* nly *Milk*, muſt not be Neglected. Luk. 12.42. *Who then is that faithful & wiſe ſteward whom his ord ſhall make ruler over his houſhold, to give them eir portion of meat in due ſeaſon?*

HERE, to be a little particular;

SOME are *Ignorant*; And that whither, ro' the *Tenderneſs of their Years* (For under-anding is not born with us) or the *Negligence their Education*, or the *Slenderneſs of their Capa-ies*, Theſe muſt be *Taught* with all Diligence, oth *Publickly* & from *Houſe to Houſe*, Miniſters e *Teachers* and muſt be a kind of Spiritual Pa-

rents to theſe, Endeavouring to inſtill the Principles of Religion into them, uſing *Precept upon precept* and *Line upon line*, if haply they may be bro't to *underſtand Doctrine*.

AGAIN, Some are *Careleſs*, *Indifferent* and *Unconcerned* about the matter, They ſcarce Trouble themſelves whither theſe things are true or falſe. They give them the Hearing, as they do other Common matters; but are not aware of what Importance or Concernment they are unto them, Theſe muſt be rowzed up by the moſt Awakening Conſiderations to *apply their hearts unto true wiſdom*.

AGAIN, Some have *ſuck'd in ill Principles*, not Agreeable to the *form of Sound words* or the *Doctrine* that is *after Godlineſs*. Theſe muſt be made ſenſible of their Miſtakes, and great pains muſt be taken with them for their Conviction, if *God peradventure* may *give them repentance to the Acknowledging of the Truth*. Accordingly, it is reckon'd up among the Qualifications of a Biſhop, that he ſhould be *able by ſound Doctrine, both to Exhort and Convince the gainſayers*. Tit. 1. 9. Farther, of theſe, Some are *more obſtinate in their miſtakes*, who not only miſs the Truth, but boldly oppoſe it, with Rudeneſs and Clamour, Induſtriouſly Propagating and Diſſeminating their Errors that they may draw away followers after them, Theſe muſt be conſtantly withſtood, not only endeavouring to convince them by ſound reaſoning, but by all other proper methods to *Stop their Mouths*. Tit. 1. 10, 11. *For there are many*

many unruly & vain Talkers and Deceivers, eſpecially they of the Circumciſion, whoſe mouths muſt be ſtopped, who ſubvert whole Houſes, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's ſake.

AGAIN, Many of our Auditors are *Unconverted*, They are as yet in *the Gall of Bitterneſs and Bond of Iniquity*. That change is not yet paſſed upon them, without which our Lord hath ſaid that people ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: Theſe we muſt endeavour to convince of the great Danger of continuing in ſuch a condition, we muſt ſhew them the Deſtruction and Miſery that is before them, except they repent, and put them upon Flying immediately from the wrath that is to come.

OTHERS, are Happily *Born again*, The God of their Fathers hath met with them, and given them a new Heart and a new way that they may fear him for ever, Theſe we muſt Feed and Strengthen and Encourage, Both the Sheep and the Lambs, that they may be built up in their moſt holy Faith unto Eternal Life.

AGAIN, Some are ſtrongly *Addicted to theſe and thoſe Vicious courſes*, They Sin openly and in the Sight of the Sun, they declare their Sin as Sodom, they hide it not & can even glory in their ſhame, Theſe muſt be dealt Plainly and Faithfully with & told where theſe things will End in, we muſt not be afraid or backward to round them in the Ear with their Wickedneſs and Folly. Tit. 1. 12, 13. *One of themſelves even a Prophet of their own, ſaid, The Cretians are always*

Lyars, Evil-beaſts, Slow-bellyes, This witneſs is true; Wherefore rebuke them ſharply, that they may be ſound in the Faith.

AND to Mention no more, Some *are Feeble-minded, caſt down, overburthened with Sorrow,* They go about from day to day, with heavy Hearts, whether upon the account of their Sins, or of their Afflictions; Theſe muſt be Comforted, Strengthened and Encouraged, we muſt teach them & help them to bear up under their Griefs, and Imitate this Apoſtle, who could ſay of himſelf, *Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not?* Thus the Apoſtle Sums many of theſe things together, in 1 Theſ. 5. 14. *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, ſupport the weak, be patient toward all men.* But that is the Firſt, *&c.*

II. I am to Conſider, *THAT when Miniſters do thus rightly Divide the Word of Truth, they may paſs for workmen that need not be aſhamed.* Text -- *A workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly Dividing the Word of Truth.* When they perform their ſervice, Workman like, when they are in ſome good degree Maſters of their Profeſſion, when they acquit themſelves worthily in their Stations, Now they may hold up their Heads with confidence.

AS on the one hand, when Miniſters groſly fail in theſe Points, if they do not underſtand their Buſineſs, if they are altogether Incapable of their Undertaking, or are Slack and Remiſs

n Attending to it, they may well Bluſh and be Aſhamed to ſhew their Faces; Why did they neddle with that which they underſtood nohing about, will Conſcience ſay? So on the other and, if they have the Holy Skill and Wiſdom iven them from above, rightly to Divide the Word of Truth, tho' *Shame* may be *caſt upon them* as ſometimes the Enemy will endeavour to pour ontempt upon the moſt well deſerving, that heir hands may be Weakned and their hearts Diſcouraged,) yet they *need not to be Aſhamed*, o long as they are conſcious to themſelves that y the Aſſiſtance of Divine Grace they have ehaved themſelves worthily & well. And this ill be a great & Singular advantage to them, at hree ſeaſons Eſpecially.

1. *WHEN they are Aſperſed, unjuſtly Cenſured nd run Down by Ignorant and Fooliſh men.* This ill ſometimes happen, ſo long as the Tongues f men are Looſe and under little or no Governnent, and perſons of the beſt merit cannot proniſe themſelves that they ſhall altogether eſcape heir Laſh, Even *John the Apoſtle* had an Inſolent *Diotrephes, prating againſt him with Malicious words*, ometimes, even the meaneſt of the People will et themſelves up for Judges and take upon them o cenſure the Diſcourſes which they hear, ſomehing or other they will be ſure to find fault ith, if it doth not happen to ſuit and pleaſe hem, Or if it be only to keep their malignant iſpoſitions in exerciſe, and they will be open nd vehement and harſh in their cenſures too,

They

They will run them down at no rate & aſperſe them in all companyes; but if they have rightly Divided the Word of Truth & Acquitted themſelves well in the ſtation of the Miniſtry, They need not Value all that they can ſay, They have *no need to be Aſhamed*, but they may *bind* ſuch kind of Aſperſions and reproaches to their *heads as a Crown*, as proceeding from People of no Judgment and think with the Apoſtle. 2 Cor. 12. 11. —— *For I ought to have been Commended of You* ——

2. *WHEN they come Seriouſly to Reviſe & take a View of their ownConduct of themſelves in the work of the Miniſtry.* This Miniſters *muſt* and *will* ſometimes do; as they look over the other parts of their Lives, ſo they will reflect upon their Conduct & Behaviour as Miniſters, There are times and occurrences in providence which will put them upon recollecting how they have managed, Even tho' they have no great mind to it, If now they may obſerve that they have been faulty in not delivering the whole Counſel of God, Or they have not done it plainly and faithfully, If they have Neglected their Charge & *handled the word of God deceitfully*, and not Endeavoured by *Manifeſtation of the truth to Commend themſelves to every mans Conſcience in the ſight of God.* If they may Charge themſelves as the Lord by the Prophet doth the Unfaithful Shepherds. Ezek. 34. 4 *The Diſeaſed have ye not ſtrengthened, Neither have ye healed that which was Sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, Neither have ye bro't again*

that

hat which was driven away, Neither have ye ſought hat which was Loſt. They muſt needs bluſh at the emembrance of ſuch an Unhappy Conduct and ot be able to ſtand the ſhock of their Own Re-ections; Whereas, if now they are conſcious o themſelves that they have rightly Divided he Word of Truth, & given to every one their ortion in due Seaſon, what ever their ſucceſs ay have been, they may be eaſie and ſatisfied n their own minds, & be able to look themſelves n the Face with confidence.

3. *WHEN they come to ſtand before their Lord's ribunal and Anſwer for themſelves at his Judgment at.* Now if they can but truly ſay that they ave Conſcienciouſly Attended their Miniſtry, hat they are pure from the blood of all men; that ey have taught the will of God plainly & faith-lly & Impartially (And God, who Searcheth the eart and is Acquainted with every mans work, nows well whither they ſay true) It will yield em a moſt unſpeakable Support and Comfort nd it will not fail of its Reward. Mat. 24. 45, 6, 47. *Who then is a faithful and wiſe Servant--- leſſed is that Servant whom his Lord when he Cometh all find ſo Doing, Verily I ſay unto you, that he all make him ruler over all his goods.*

WHEREAS Eternal Bluſhing and Confu-on will cover them at that Day who have been reacherous and Unfaithful in their Work, and l their pretences of having Suſtained a ſacred haracter and *Propheſied in Chriſts Name*, will e ſo far from yielding them any Comfort,

that

that it will Contribute to their greater Condemnation.

III. I am to Conſider, *THAT the Principal Aim of Miniſters in this their rightly Dividing the Word of Truth, ſhould be to Approve themſelves to God.* Text, *Study to ſhew thy Self Approved unto GOD, a Workman,* &c. The Approbation of Men (eſpecially if they be wiſe and good Men) as it is not to be Rejected & Deſpiſed, ſo neither is it to be overvalued. This we ſhould not propound to ourſelves as our end, nor make it our aim, for what do their Praiſes & Commendations Signify? To have a number of People crying us up for Rare Preachers, Eloquent Orators, Strong and Fair Diſputants, Faithful Paſtors and the Like, (tho' their Witneſs may be true and there may be ſomething within us that is too apt to be taken with it, yet) what good doth it do us? It is but a little Popular and Vain Breath. The ſame People may Cry us as much down to morrow, However, both they & we are paſſing off the Stage, Both the Praiſers & the Praiſed muſt go down together to the Duſt. This conſideration alone is enough to cure our fondneſs for the approbation of men; But the Approbation of GOD is worth the ſeeking after, & we may well have that in our eye, while we behave ourſelves as we ought in our Miniſtry.

1. *BECAUSE it brings abundance of Real and Subſtantial Bleſſings along with it.* To be *Approved of GOD* is the utmoſt that need to be deſired

to

make us happy, Such an one can never be iſerable ; For his Approbation, doth not like ours) conſiſt meerly in ſmooth & plauſible ords, high Encomiums,or an Inward,yet empty ſteem, but it is productive of all good to the erſons Approved of ; While he approves he leſſeth, The *Commendation* of our *Lord & Maſter* accompanied with all the real Tokens of his avour ; It will ſtand us in ſtead both *Living* and *ying* and be uſeful to us *in this World* and *in the ext*, This brings me to

2. *BECAUSE it will be given in a very Critical unCture, when it will be as much as our Lives & all is orth to be Diſapproved by him.* The Lord will approve of them who have ſtudied to ſhew themlves workmen that need not be aſhamed, right- Dividing the Word of Truth, at the *Hour Death* and the *Day of Judgment*, which are very ritical times indeed,when mens Eſtates are to be cided to all Eternity and they muſt *receive acrding to their Works.* To be Owned by him now, ill fill us with Joy, Conſolation and good hope, Vhereas to be Diſowned now, it will throw us to the utmoſt Confuſion.

3. *BECAUSE this Approbation of God,when it is ce beſtowed will be Continued to us for Ever.* Mens pprobation is like themſelves, *Fickle* and *Uncerin*; Without ground,many times,they will high- Applaud perſons, And for no reaſon their Apauſes ſhall be changed into Reproaches & Cenres ; what they Cry up now will be out of date ith them in a little Time, They that Cry *Ho-*

ſanna, to day, may Cry as loud *Crucify*, to morrow But whom God Approves, he always approves and they ſhall ſtand in his ſight and Dwell in his preſence for Ever.

IV. And Laſtly. I am to Conſider, THAT *Miniſters ſhould Study, give Diligence & uſe their be Endeavour, that they may be ſuch Workmen, as Nee not be aſhamed, rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* Text, *Study, &c.* They ſhould labour to furniſh themſelves with Miniſterial gifts & graces all the while that they have it in their tho'ts to devote themſelves to this Sacred work, And even after they have been *Judged Faithful & put into the Mi niſtry*, they ſhould labour ſtill to grow & Improve more and more in theſe things.

TWO or three things ſeem to be Couched in this Term.

1. *THAT it will Coſt a man ſome pains & Study to be any thing Eminent in the Miniſterial Profeſſion* Miniſters in our Times be not Immediately in ſpired, Qualified & ſent forth into the Vineyard And thoſe few Crazed and ſoft headed Perſons that pretend to be ſo, do commonly make ſuch wretched Work of it, that we may know from thence their pretences to be Vain; Our Accom pliſhments muſt be gained by much Study, Dili gence and Prayer to God, We muſt Converſe in timately with the Sacred Scriptures and peruſe thoſe Treatiſes that have been Compoſed by the

God

dly Wise, for the Unfolding & Explaining of ose divine Writings, & we must attend to them we make our selves Masters of what they have livered; Even Timothy himself, tho' he lived the Age of Miracles & Inspiration & was Extraordinarily assisted from above, must yet Study l take Pains. 1 Tim. 4. 13, 14, 15. *Till I come e attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doc-ne, Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was en thee by Prophecy, with the laying on of the hands he Presbytery. Meditate upon these things, give Self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear ll.* Much more must Ministers in our times, o are destitute of these Extraordinary Assistces, Labour and take Pains, Study, Meditate d Pray, as ever they would hope to be any ng Eminent and Shine in their Office.

2. *THAT with Care, Study and Diligent endeavr, we may happily arrive to some tolerable Skill, ptly to divide the Word of Truth.* Where there any thing of a Genius for the Work, God is nt to Bless the Diligent and Industrious, while e slothful and careless, never arrive to any ug that is Excellent; we have seen Instances both kinds, in this Land; Some that have *lt with a Slack hand*, have remained in a Deser-d obscurity & Neglect; But on the other hand, w many *Burning & shining Lights* hath God set in this part of his Church? Men that by their wearied Studies have attained to uncommon compliſhments & done a great deal of Service their Lord and Master in their Day. The

Lord help us that remain to Imitate their Dili
gence, that we alſo may do worthily in our Da
and Generation.

3. *THAT when Miniſters are either neceſſaril
Conſtrained, or thro' their own Sloth do ſurceaſe thei
Endeavours of this Nature, their Miniſtrations will b
Poor, Weak and Indifferent.* It may ſoon be per
ceived by their Performances, whether the
have uſed Study and a commendable Diligenc
& Endeavour in their Preparations; Sometime
it hath ſo happened, that Miniſters have bee
ſtraitned for Leiſure, They have been Neceſſaril
taken off from their work, to *Provide for their own*
the things Needful for this Life, leſt they ſhoul
ſhew themſelves *worſe than Infidels*, They hav
been Incumbred with care and concern abou
their Subſiſtance, how they ſhould anſwer thi
Debt, how they ſhould procure this or tha
needful ſupply; from which care, their peopl
(among whom they have ſerved) ought to hav
freed them, & then they have not ſhewed them
ſelves ſuch Workmen, their Diſcourſes have no
ſmelt ſo much of the Lamp, as they were wont t
do, nor can it be expected that they ſhould; An
others of promiſing Abilities who have ſet ou
well and raiſed large Expectations concernin
them, have afterwards Slackned their Ende
vours without any Neceſſity, & then they coul
do but little ſervice, their Miniſtrations hav
been Flat, Inſipid and Lifeleſs, and they hav
ſcarce *Profited the People at all.*

THIS may ſerve for Explication.

USE

USE.

THESE things are Capable of very large improvement, and may furniſh us with very profitable Inſtructions. It may Teach the Miniſters of the Goſpel to keep Exactly to their rule & not to vend Fables and Traſh, inſtead of the ſubſtantial Truths of Gods Word; It may inform them what conſtant need they have of Help & Aſſiſtance from above in ſuch a Weighty & Important Work as theirs is; It may drive them to & keep them ſtill upon their knees, and it ſhould engage the Prayers of their People on their account that they may come to them ſtill in the fulneſs of the Bleſſing of the Goſpel of Peace;

IT ſhould preſerve them from being deſirous of vain glory & gaping after the praiſe & Applauſe of men.

THEY ſhould Remember that, as they are Imployed about Gods Work, ſo they are ſtill under His Eye, are accountable to Him and muſt at laſt ſtand or fall by His Judgment. And many other profitable Leſſons might be drawn from what hath been ſpoken, But the only Uſe that I ſhall now make of theſe things, is,

1. TO Addreſs my ſelf more immediately to him who is this day to be ſet apart to the Sacred Work of the Miniſtry, Together with the reſt of my Reverend Brethren. And,

2. TO the People in this place among whom chiefly this Labourer in the Lords Vineyard is deſigned to Miniſter.

1. *I ſhall Addreſs my ſelf more Immediately to him, who is this Day to be ſet apart to the Sacred Work of the Miniſtry, together with the reſt of my Reverend Brethren here preſent.*

Sirs, WE have heard what is the Work of the Miniſters of the Goſpel, even rightly to Divide the Word of Truth, that thereby they may approve themſelves to God to be Workmen that need not to be aſhamed; Wherefore let us all be exhorted to Study and Endeavour for this, as far as our Weakneſſes and Infirmities and the Multiplyed Incumbrances of Living, will give us leave.

THERE is a rich *Treaſure* put into theſe *Earthen Veſſels,* Let it be our care to Diſtribute and Diſpenſe it out to every one, as *good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God,* We are placed, as it were, in an Hoſpital (being Sick indeed ourſelves &conſequently needing the healing Hand of the great Phyſician) yet we are a ſort of under-Phyſicians, who muſt as we are able, regard the Maladies of the Flock and apply the proper Remedies Seaſonably, to the beſt of our skill, according to the Preſcriptions of the Word; With ſome we may deal more Roughly, their caſe requires it, But others muſt be managed with a more Gentle & Tender Hand; The Lord make us all *able Miniſters of the new Teſtament,* that by *Manifeſtation of the Truth, we may Approve ourſelves to every ones Conſcience in the ſight of God.*

THE Work is exceeding great and it is to be feared, that few of us attend it as we ought,

For,

For, *who is Sufficient for these things*? The Lord be Merciful to the Failings, Defects & Shortcomings of His Servants who *desire to Fear and Love His Name.* And grant us such Grace, that however we may come short, thro' unavoidable Infirmity or the violence of Temptation, or an Impossibility of doing every thing in places of such large Extent, as are now a days put under one mans Inspection & Care, yet that we may not be found Guilty at the Last of a more criminal Negligence, an unaccountable Sloth, or a wicked Perverting, Corrupting or Suppressing of the Truth.

THAT we may not with that *Wicked and Slothful Servant*, mentioned in the Gospel, in the Day when our Lord shall come and *reckon with His Servants*, return Him His *one Talent* again, *wrapt up in a Napkin* and almost Devoured with Rust for want of use, with that short and pert Answer, *Lo, here thou hast that which was thine.* But may happily be found to have Imitated those other good Servants, who by their Industry and *Occupying till their Lord come*, had doubled his Money and heard that heart-chearing return upon it, *Well done good and faithful Servants you have been faithful in a few things, I will make you ruler over many things, Enter ye into the Joy of your Lord.*

AS for us, who have for some time been Imployed as *Labourers* in our Lords *Vineyard*, in *Weakness* & *Fear* and in *much Trembling*, We could say many things about those Difficulties, Tryals and Temptations we have met with, and what

a *great fight of Afflictions* we have Endured, whi
we have been called forth to Encounter wit
Ignorance and *Prejudice*, *Miſtakes* and *Obſtinac*
Pride, *Envy* and *Prophaneneſs*, *the Luſts of Men* an
the *wiles of the Devil*; while we have been force
to *paſs through Honour and Diſhonour*, *evil Repor*
and *good Report*, and in theſe and ſuch like thing
to try to *Approve ourſelves* ſtill *as the Miniſter*
of God.

BUT, be not thou Diſcouraged, our dea
Brother, *go in this thy might* and *be ſtrong in th*
Grace which is in Chriſt Jeſus; *Enter thou* alſo *int*
the Vineyard, Clothed with Humility, Burnin
with Zeal, Shining in Wiſdom, Armed with Pa
tience, Fortifyed with Reſolution and relyin
Intirely upon a Superiour Strength and Grac
to carry thee thro' all Services and Suffering
never Doubting, but that our Gracious Lord an
Maſter, who is now calling you forth into hi
Service, will afford you his Bleſſed Preſence an
Aſſiſtance, Since, in the day when he was abou
to leave the World, and gave Charge, Direcki
ons and Orders to his Diſciples, he promiſed t
be with his Servants always, *even to the End of th*
World. For God is not *unmindful of our Work an*
Labour of Love, the Diligence and Faithfulne
which his Servants ſhew; You may indeed be pu
to ſtay a while for your full reward, but when
the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, *you ſhall receive*
Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.

2. I ſhall Addreſs my ſelf, *to the People in thi*
Place among whom chiefly, *this Labourer that is no*

be thruſt forth into the Lord's Vineyard, is deſign'd miniſter. Chriſtian Friends & Brethren, It was Frown of Providence upon You, when your ſtor* not ſo many years ago ſetled among you, as forced to Deſiſt from his Miniſterial Labours, reaſon of Bodily Indiſpoſition, Continuing & creaſing upon him (May the God of our Lives nd our Health, graciouſly reſtore Health to his rvant, & whatever Station Providence may ſee uſe to fix him in, grant that he ſtill may be rviceable to his Church) But now God ſeems be returning to You in Mercy & hath provided *man* to be again *Set over this Congregation*; *Reive him from the hands of your aſcended Lord and viour. See that he may be with you without fear, r he worketh the work of the Lord, even as we.* Let im not want any of that Encouragement and ſſiſtance which it is in your power to give him, nd be ſure to Pray for him daily, in your Clots & in your Families, that he may Ever *Come to u in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the Goſpel of Chriſt*, ince he is obliged to ſtudy to ſhew himſelf Aproved to God, a Workman that needeth not to e aſham'd, rightly Dividing the Word of Truth, et nothing be wanting on your part which may nd to the attaining of this good End.

TWO or three things I ſhall briefly hint at, hich are in the People's power & it is their Duty Intereſt to do for the fartherance of the Goſpel iſpenſed, Strengthening the hands & Encoura-

* *The Reverend Mr.* SAMUEL SMITH.

ging the hearts of their Teachers and that th Word of Truth may be the more rightly & ſuc ceſsfully Divided, and ſo I ſhall Conclude.

1. *YOU muſt not ſuffer him to want any thing fo his Temporal Support.* For how can it be ſuppoſe that Miniſters ſhould (as they ought) *ſhew them ſelves Workmen that need not to be aſhamed, right Dividing the Word of Truth*, when their *heads ar fill'd with Tho'ts* & their *hearts with Cares*, how the ſhall Subſiſt themſelves & their Families, or kee off their *Creditors* from coming to *take all that the have*; This is a moſt Melancholy ſtate of thing and a Vaſt Hinderance to a due attendance upo the Miniſterial work; Wherefore let it be you part, Honeſtly & punctually to ſupply & relie him againſt any ſuch Temporal Straits & Want that he may be at full Liberty to attend to th Care of your precious Souls; *Say I theſe things as man? Saith not the Scripture alſo the ſame?* Whic tells us that, *Even ſo hath the Lord Ordained, tha they who Preach the Goſpel ſhould Live of the Goſpel That they who are taught in the Word ſhould Commu nicate to him that teacheth in all good things*, And th Apoſtle Paul tells People that if Miniſters *Sow unt them Spiritual things, it is but a ſmall matter if they rea their Carnal things*, It is not a proportional *Re compence* for the Benefit which they receive fro their Faithful Miniſters, To be ſure then the ought not to begrutch or withhold ſo much as thi And abundance of Paſſages there be of the ſam Nature, ſcatter'd thro' out both the Teſtaments

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AND here, I cannot help obſerving (how-
er Invidious it may ſeem and ſome may think
t it looks too much like pleading our own
uſe, which will ſcarce be allowed us to do)
t it is Probable, that a great part of that Diſ-
eaſure, which God in his Providence hath Ma-
feſted againſt the Country, is owing to that Diſ-
genious Treatment which they who ſerve them
the Concerns of their Souls, have met with,
nd that People would thrive a great deal more,
th in their *Temporal* & *Spiritual Intereſts*, if they
nded their hand in this point; I am ſure it
s ſo in old Time. Mal. 3. 8,---12. *Will a man*
God? yet ye have robbed me: but ye ſay, Wherein
we we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are
rſed with a curſe: for ye have robbed me, even this
ole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the ſtore-
uſe, that there may be meat in mine houſe, and
ve me now herewith, ſaith the LORD *of hoſts, if*
will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour
u out a bleſſing, that there ſhall not be room enough
receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your
kes, and he ſhall not deſtroy the fruits of your ground;
ither ſhall your vine caſt her fruit before the time in
e field, ſaith the LORD *of hoſts. And all nations*
ll call you bleſſed: for ye ſhall be a delightſom land,
ith the LORD *of hoſts.*

2. *WHATEVER Doctrine he Delivers, what-*
er Diſcipline he Exerciſeth, that is agreable to the
riptures (that infallible Rule) *muſt have your*
untenance and Approbation.

YOU muſt not come to hear in a captio Manner, nor bring any rooted Prejudices wit you into the Publick, neither nouriſh a Diſputa cious and Quarrelſom Diſpoſition, but agreabl to the Apoſtles Direction, with *Meekneſs* yo muſt *receive the Ingrafted word, which is able to ſav your Souls.*

WITH what heart can Miniſters Preach when their People are ſtill upon the Catch, wait ing to pick up Matter for Quarrel & Diſpute Farther, While he ſhall Endeavour to give t Every one their portion, Your Concurrence wi be Neceſſary to render it more Effectual; Whe he ſhall aim at the *Converſion of Sinners* and th *Edification of Saints*, You muſt wiſh him, *God ſpeed* and pray to God to make this Word Effectua Would to God (may you ſay) that all the Lord People were thorowly Converted, and that *walk ing in the Fear of God & Comfort of the Holy Ghoſt* they may ſtill *be multiplied*; When he ſhall giv words of Counſel & Advice to the different Sort & Ages of People, You ſhould follow them wit your more private Endeavours that they may b Crowned with Succeſs: When he *Comforts th feeble-minded* & tries to heal them that are broke with Griefs & Afflictions, You muſt alſo lend a helping hand and be as thoſe that *Comfort th Mourners.* And Principally, when he *Admoniſh eth Open Offenders* & Endeavours to *bring them t Repentance*, You muſt ſo carry it that they may b *Convinced of all* and *Judged of all*; Sinners muſ not be bolſtered up in their Impieties or *ſcreen'd*

fro

om Diſcipline, by making party's in their Defence ecauſe they are *Relations* or *Friends* or *Neighbours*, ll muſt appear to be *on the Lord's ſide*, who is reater and better and nearer to us all, than any riends whatſoever and whoſe honour ſhould ly earer to our hearts, than the Eaſe or Quiet or eputation of any of our Relations or Acquain-ance; You ſhould in ſuch Caſes imitate the Zeal Impartiality of the Children of Levi, who ex-ted themſelves Couragiouſly in God's Quarrel nd of whom Moſes bears this Honourable Teſti-ony, in, Deut. 33.9 *Who ſaid unto his Father & his Mother, I have not ſeen him, Neither did he ac-nowledge his Brethren, nor know his own Children, For hey have Obſerved thy Word & kept thy Covenant.*

PARTICULARLY, In *Admiſſion into & Excommunication out of the Church*, Your Hand hould ſtill be with him for the *promoting of Order, Advancing the intereſt of Chriſt's Kingdom* and the *iving an Efficacy to the Exerciſe of Diſcipline*, And ot by an Unaccountable Stiffneſs, affect to lay Obſtructions in the way of thoſe who are Ap-roaching to the Lord's Table, after a due Examination hath been had of their Qualifications, and o juſt reaſon (that will bear the ſcanning) can e alledged to hinder their Admiſſion (as ſome ave done, whither to ſhew their odd & ſtubborn Humour, Or elſe to try to what height their *Power of Priviledge* might be carried) Nor yet hen any, by their *Obſtinacy* in ſome *Open Faults* nd *refuſing to be Reclaimed*, have juſtly Expoſed hemſelves to the *Awful Cenſure* of *Excommunica-*

tion,

tion, ſhould any Combine in their Defence or ſhew them that Countenance, which they are obliged to do to ſuch *as walk Orderly*, For the Efficacy of this Cenſure doth very much depend upon the Carriage of their Brethren towards them afterward, who ſhould remember the words of our Saviour, *Let him be to thee as an Heathen or a Publican* Mat. 18. 17. Or thoſe, 1 Cor. 5. 11. *But now I have written unto you, not to keep Company, If any man that is called a Brother be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolator, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with ſuch an one, no not to Eat.* Or thoſe, in, 2 Theſ. 3. 14. *And if any man Obey not our word, by this Epiſtle* (he had juſt been ſpeaking of *Idle* People, *Buſie-bodies* & *Diſorderly walkers*) *Note that man and have no Company with him that he may be Aſhamed.* In theſe and ſuch like reſpects ſhould your hands be with your Paſtor, Otherwiſe it will be long of You, if the Workman, who would fain rightly divide the Word of Truth doth yet fail of Succeſs.

3. *ABOVE all, you muſt take care that your Profiting may appear, and that his Labour be not loſt upon you.* For it is a moſt *Diſcouraging* thing to be always *Propheſying to the Wind*, to be for ever Addreſſing ourſelves to the ſenſeleſs Rocks, to Preach from year to year to them who will not mind us or regard any thing that we ſay; With what a Melancholy Air do the Prophets make theſe kind of Complaints! Iſa. 49. 4. *Then I ſaid I have Laboured in Vain, I have ſpent my ſtrength for Nought*

ought & in Vain---. Isa. 53. 1. *Who hath believed our port? and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?* r. 20. 9. *Then I said, I will not make mention of him, speak any more in his Name.*

BUT, *Beloved, We are perswaded better things You & things which accompany Salvation, tho' we us speak.*

WHEREFORE, Let your Profiting daily ppear, and this way Endeavour to Strengthen nds & Encourage the heart of your worthy hom you have Choſen, And let us all ay that the *Seed* which ſhall be ſown in this ace, may ever fall upon *good ground*, that it may *ing up* & *bear fruit*, *ſome Thirty*, *ſome Sixty*, *ſome Hundred-fold*, That in the Day when the Lord all *write up the People* and *count over his Jewels*, it ay be found that *this & that & the other Perſon*, a great Numbers of People were *born* here, So all both *You* and *your Paſtor rejoice together in the ay of Chriſt*; *He*, that he hath not *Laboured* and *in Vain*, and *You*, that you were enabled to ear as you ought, to receive & hold faſt & per- vere in the paths of Truth and Holineſs to e End.

NOW the God of Peace, that brought again from e Dead, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the great Shepherd the Sheep, through the blood of the Everlaſting Co- nant, make you all perfect in every good work, to do will, working in you that which is well pleaſing in Sight, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be glory for ver and Ever. AMEN.

FINIS.

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